



Wayside Base Maintenance

Although wayside exhibits are among the most durable of all interpretive media—and usually require little maintenance—their usefulness can be enhanced and extended by occasional inspection and care. We recommend that each wayside exhibit be examined and cleaned bi-annually. If more extensive repair or replacement is needed, help is available from Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) through the Wayside Exhibit Minor Rehab Program. Contact program coordinator Susan Haines by telephone (304 535-6033), by electronic mail, or through our website (www.nps.gov/waysite). Drive rivets (sometimes needed in the replacement of wayside panels) are also available from the Center.

Cleaning

Cleaning each exhibit regularly with mild soap and water will maintain the general appearance of the exhibit and will remove dirt and debris that can actually cause more damage. Cleaning can also reveal hidden damage.

Touch Up

Minor scratches and paint chips can be repaired by applying small amounts of paint according to the following procedures:

Sand Area

By hand or orbital sander, first use 80 grit sandpaper, then smooth with 100 grit paper.

Clean

Wipe with a lint-free rag, using a solvent such as enamel thinner or lacquer thinner. Wipe solvent off immediately. Do not touch the surface after cleaning.

Mix Catalyst and Paint (available from HFC)

Mix one part catalyst to six parts paint, exactly. Paint will become too glossy and brittle with too much catalyst. With too little catalyst the paint will not cure properly and will fade quickly. Mix only what you can use in 2 hours.

Apply Paint

Depending on the amount of surface to cover, use a throw-away artist's brush, roller, or sprayer (spraying requires reducer and thinner). Stipple the fresh paint (using a pipe cleaner folded in half) to simulate the original textured finish. Air temperature at time of application should be from 65 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit; 77° is optimal. Paint dries to the touch in 3 hours, is workable in 8-10 hours, and cures in 2-3 days under normal conditions.

Refinishing

If the surface of the wayside exhibit base has suffered extensive damage, the entire base can be repainted. For detailed information, contact HFC for a video guide to refinishing wayside hardware in the field.

Replacement

Time, budget, logistical, and environmental considerations associated with refinishing wayside exhibit bases in the field may suggest that replacing bases is a better alternative than repairing them. Low-profile bases typically cost about \$600; upright bases cost about \$1000. If you choose to replace your bases, designs are available that allow easy removal of bases to facilitate their refinishing in a maintenance shop instead of the field.